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W O M E N



OF

ACHIEVEMENT

IN MARYLAND

HISTORY

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Anne Catherine Hoof Green

CIRCA 1720–1775, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Maryland is richer because she persevered.



COURTESY OF MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In this day of massive and almost instant media coverage, it is difficult to imagine a time when a small weekly newspaper was one's only link to world, national, and local events. Today, with hundreds of daily newspapers, multiple television stations, and news magazines, all with professional staff and sophisticated equipment, news and analysis of it are instantly available to anyone who seeks it. Furthermore, pictures enable viewers to witness events as if they were there. Modern media can convey the devastation of hurricanes or the tragedy of war.

In colonial America in the mid-1700s, being informed was no easy task. Certainly the news of that day was no less important than that of the present, yet when dramatic events happened, some of life-and-death importance, few knew about them. Paul Revere and his horse had to alert towns of the British invasion. Horse and rider were the fastest form of communication at that time. So the early printers and their primitive newspapers became the lifelines connecting small towns across a young country. When America declared its independence, newspapers allowed citizens to follow a war that would create a new nation.

Catherine Green was a woman who provided that lifeline, that link to the community and surrounding area of Annapolis, Maryland. Hers is the story of one of the earliest colonial newspapers, Maryland's first newspaper, the weekly *Maryland Gazette*.

Green was married to Jonas Green, the publisher of the *Gazette*, and the mother of fourteen children. The Greens moved to Annapolis, Maryland sometime around 1738. Previously employed as a printer in Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin, Jonas Green became printer to the province soon after their arrival (Alexander 169). In 1745, he started the *Maryland Gazette*, which at the time was also the only newspaper in Maryland.

Rearing children took up a significant portion of Catherine Green's time, yet historians believe that Green must have also helped her husband publish the newspaper. Life could not have been easy for her. Over the years, she buried most of her children and then her husband. Still, Green was able to continue publication without a break. In order to do so, she must have had a thorough knowledge of the family business.

Upon Jonas Green's death, Catherine Green, then forty-five years old, was able to produce the *Acts and Votes and Proceedings* of the 1767 Maryland Assembly on schedule, as well as run the newspaper with the help of a son (Carr 80). The Maryland Assembly did not pay her, however, until a year after her husband's death. At that time, because she performed her duties so well, she was appointed to her husband's post as printer to the province.

The *Gazette* played an important role in informing citizens of the political events leading up to the Revolutionary War. Green printed communications from the northern Colonies, showing the increasing protest against the British taxation laws, detailing such events as the Boston Tea Party. She also printed other forms of protest against the British, which no doubt helped colonists decide where they stood in the revolutionary cause. Green also allowed healthy debate in the columns of her paper. She covered both sides of any argument (Carr 81).

In giving colonists a newspaper, Green gave them power, the power of information. This crucial reporting helped unite them in the common cause of independence. Green also published books, pamphlets, and almanacs, rare treasures for colonists.

When Green died in 1775 at the age of fifty-five, her son Frederick assumed responsibility for the *Gazette*. Maryland is richer because she persevered. Historians know much more about the early days of the state because of Catherine Green's printed legacy. ❀